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Making Nature Whole: a History of Ecological Restoration. William R. Jordan III and George M. Lubick.

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Making Nature Whole: a History of Ecological Restoration. William R. Jordan III and George M. Lubick. 2011. Island Press, Washington D.C., USA. 254 pages. \$70.00 (hardcover), \$35.00 (paperback), \$34.99 (ebook). ISBN: 9781597265126 (hardcover), 9781597265133 (paperback), 9781610910422 (e-book).

Ecological restoration—the process of assisting the recovery of ecosystems that have been degraded, damaged, or destroyed—is being incorporated into the fabric of our society. The practice of ecological restoration of natural areas developed and grew in the twentieth century in response to widespread human disturbance of natural communities. Undoubtedly, this type of restoration will continue to increase in importance in the coming decades given the extensive alteration of ecosystems that is occurring and that is showing no signs of abating.

As indicated in the promotional material for *Making Nature Whole*, Jordan and Lubick have provided a seminal publication for the relatively new field of ecological restoration. As a comparative vehicle and standard for restoration activities, they contrast ecocentric restoration, (i.e., the literal recreation of a previously existing ecosystem with all of its parts and processes) with meliorative land management (i.e., making an environment “better” for someone). While indicating that ideas about restoration vary, the authors argue for ecocentric restoration as a model or ideal criteria to provide a context for comparing restoration activities and projects.

The authors provide an excellent chronology and perspective of the origin and history of ecological restoration using ecocentric restoration as the “ideal” comparative standard for the discourse. Beginning with the use of fire by hominids to create and maintain (“restore”) habitat for themselves, the authors trace the precedents and elements of restoration to the present day. In developing this historical chronology, they explore cultural, theological, philosophical and environmental perspectives as well as traditions of societies, monastic orders, institutions, organizations, agencies, and nature movements. Their laying of the foundation for ecocentric restoration in the first three chapters includes some rather informative, mind-stretching and challenging ideas and concepts. A warning seems appropriate here: a cursory reading of this material will not suffice.

As the authors focus more on recent history in Chapter 4 (“Invention”), the authors identify six projects initiated between 1906 and the mid-1930s that they considered to be examples of early attempts at ecocentric restoration. In their opinion, this small sample is representative of how the conservation community was beginning to ecologically perceive and practice ecological land management during that period. The principal participants of these projects considered them to be demonstrations rather than experiments in land management. All were short-lived except the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum project that continues to do intensive restoration work.

Jordan’s association and familiarity with the Wisconsin Arboretum project provided him with a better understanding of the project’s conception, initiation, principal participants, goals, accomplishments, neglect, revival, and value. Obviously, its presence and history have been an influential aspect in his long-term involvement with ecological restoration (Jordan 1982).

In spite of the examples of early projects in the 1920s and 1930s and the apparent success of the Wisconsin Arboretum project, the authors indicate that there has been a half-century hiatus in the advancement of ecocentric restoration. They lament the conservation community’s failure to recognize the value of this ecological restoration strategy. However, in the interim, independent, scattered tallgrass prairie restoration projects by various practitioners validated the idea of ecocentric restoration and provided momentum for its revival.

The last half of the book deals with the past three decades as ecological restoration was emerging as a discipline. It chronicles projects of this time period that illustrate the developmental stages of ecocentric restoration. Although many of the projects in this period were utilitarian in nature, the authors cite increasing numbers of examples of successful ecocentric restoration projects. These projects include a wide variety of ecosystems such as tidal wetlands, coniferous forests, tropical forests, oak savannas, deserts, and the Everglades involving conservation organizations, national parks, governmental agencies, indigenous cultures, and local environmental groups throughout North America and other continents. Unlike earlier examples, these projects tend to be larger in size and include more species. It was interesting to read about the authors’ perceptions of the restoration period in which I was a participant (1972 to present). In retrospect, their interpretations are insightful and thought provoking. Working in the trenches, I doubt if my perspective was as enlightened, philosophical, or far thinking.

The chronology of ecological restoration culminates with a consideration of its value to humans. Through restoration, humans can interact with nature and learn more about it, experience the satisfaction of participating in the recovery of a damaged or destroyed ecosystem, and revel in the existence of the restored system.

This philosophically based, historical chronology of ecological restoration (including the human aspect) is indeed a seminal publication. Using ecocentric restoration as the definitive standard is an effective comparative tool. No doubt, there will be substantive discussions as to whether a particular restoration meets or should meet the criteria for an ecocentric restoration. I urge you to read *Making Nature Whole* and engage in the discussions.—Daryl D. Smith, Director, Tallgrass Prairie Center, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0294, USA.

LITERATURE CITED

Jordan, W., III. 1982. Making nature whole: fifty years of ecosystem restoration at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum. *George Wright Forum* 1:35–42.